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## SERMON DCXIII.

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### DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS.

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."—JOHN ix. 4.

IN these words we find an embodiment of the conceptions of obligation entertained by Jesus Christ, relative to the true end and mission of his life upon the earth. On another occasion, he is represented as saying, that he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. So here, when he was about to perform one of those miracles of healing, which so remarkably distinguished his ministry, he gave utterance to a similar statement. His language not only expresses a sense of obligation, as if he was truly alive to the necessity resting upon him; but it also bespeaks his conviction, that in order fully to meet its high claims and responsibilities, he must make use of the most diligent and persevering effort. He had a mission to perform—a mission, too, appropriately designated as a *work*, because it was destined to task the highest energies both of his mind and body. He carried with him ever, a consciousness of his responsibility to God, the Father, in whose service it had been undertaken; and the earnest promptings of his mind were hence, to unceasing diligence and effort, until it should be accomplished. "I must work," says he, "the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

This language embodies a true conception of the proper end and design of human life; and we hence make use of it, as giving

expression and enforcement to a lesson of high and universal import. *It teaches that life should be spent in diligent effort for the fulfilment of those purposes of obligation and of duty, which God has appointed us to accomplish.*

This statement implies, *first*, that God has appointed for every man a work to accomplish in life; and, *second*, that for its accomplishment, diligent effort is necessary.

I. God has appointed for every man a work to accomplish in life.

It may be appropriately described as a *peculiar* work; because in a very important sense, it stands related to the position and capacities of each individual man. As in the bodily structure, which, during the time of our sojourning upon the earth, God has made the dwelling-place of the soul, each member has its own peculiar place and office, and accomplishes the end of its being by fulfilling the functions assigned it; so in the social organization, of which, individual men are but constituent parts, each has his appointed place, with its corresponding and appropriate work. It is assigned him, not so much by the will of man, as by the Providence of God. He may be expected to attain to it, not indeed without the exercise of his own wisdom and sagacity; but still more, in humble reliance upon the wisdom of God; and by following the guidance of those providential events, which indicate the will of him, whose it is to direct the steps of his creatures.

But, as each man has his own position and work in life, and these in some sense peculiar, so his success and efficiency in that work, must depend greatly upon the aptitude of his own character and capacities, to its accomplishment. Such an aptitude may indeed be in part the gift of nature; but it must, in no small degree, be the result of cultivation; and that man evinces the highest practical wisdom, who best understands the position which God has assigned him; and who most diligently applies himself to the business of preparing to meet its demands and exigencies.

Nor do we find any exception to this truth in those cases in which the work assigned to men, is found among the allotments of common, or even humble life. Whatever may be his position, or his sphere of activity, marked out by God's Providence, every man has his work; and every such work has its individual peculiarities and features, by virtue of which, for the time being, it is made his work. This was as true of Moses when he was a shepherd in Midian, as when he was a leader and law-giver in Israel. It was as true of Jesus Christ, when he was known only as the carpenter's son, as when, in the consummation of that work, which has since become the wonder of men and of angels, he achieved the redemption of our race.

There are those, who seem to overlook this grand feature of human life. They can see, indeed, that every man's work has its peculiarity; but what is individual and special in their own work, they can recognize only in ideal pictures, of coming greatness and distinction. They can find in themselves, no fitness for doing that which is at hand, and within their reach, and which God's Providence has manifestly made their work; but they are waiting, until the wheels of that Providence shall have again revolved, and brought up new developments, and discovered new aptitudes between their own capacities and the works of greatness and magnificent enterprise which are about to be accomplished in the world. It is a most fatal mistake which such men commit: nay, it is a reckless disregard of the obligations imposed upon them by God's authority, and indicated by God's Providence. They spend life, not in doing the work assigned them; but in finding out what is the work which they are fitted to accomplish. They realize not for themselves and for others, the blessed fruits of industry. With them, life is a continued series of disappointments; and when its hours are gone, they find, in the retrospect of its wasted opportunities, that even while yet in the world, and on probationary ground, they have realized the fabled retribution of Tantalus—having been ever grasping for good, which has forever eluded their grasp.

But the work assigned to men in life, is also a *common* work. I mean, that while in a certain sense, it is peculiar, because of its relations, and adaptations to them as individuals, it has also characteristics and ends which mark it, as a work appropriate to all. Among such characteristics and ends, the following may be specified as worthy of special notice.

1. It is a work arising from the character and relations of men, as intelligent, active, and moral beings. The fact that it has been imposed, implies that they stand in certain relations of dependence and obligation to God, the Creator, who has given them their capacities, and who has prescribed the manner in which they are to be employed. As creatures of intellect, they are capable of self-knowledge and self-culture: they can understand truth, perceive relations, and discover the adaptation of means to ends in the accomplishment of any work which is assigned them. As moral and active beings, they cannot only feel the claims of duty, urging them to diligence and fidelity in their Master's service; but in the way of real accomplishment, they can fulfill his purposes. They can secure for themselves the rewards of virtue and of knowledge. They can extend to others the charities of a pure and sanctified benevolence. They can practically recognize their relations to God; and thus accomplish the ends of a holy and consecrated life. No such work has been assigned to the brutes, which inhabit the fields and the mountains: nor to the countless tribes of animals which people the

air and the waters. God has given them their nature; but it is not a rational and moral nature. He has assigned to them their sphere of action; but it is not a sphere of moral duty and accountability. He has appointed to them their destiny; but not, like that of man, a destiny of illimitable progression beyond the grave. The difference between mere animal perception and moral discrimination: between reason and instinct, does not present a wider contrast than the difference between their appointed work upon the earth, and the work assigned to man.

2. The work, of which I speak, is a work of self-culture and improvement. It arises, indeed, from the character and relations of man, as an intelligent, active and moral being: and yet the capacities which make him such a being, and by which he is brought into the relations which he holds to God and to man, are capacities capable of almost indefinite expansion. In their original state they differ from what they are susceptible of becoming, as marble in the quarry differs from the well-wrought and perfect statue: as colors in the crude mass differ from the forms of symmetry and beauty which glow upon the painter's canvass. The process by which the transformation is wrought, is the combined result of many influences. God works in his heart, both to will and to do, when man rises from the degradation of his fallen state, as a moral being. So, the aid and co-operation of others may help him on, in his course of intellectual improvement, and in the process, by which is effected a full and perfect development of his active powers: but neither the energies of divine grace enlisted in his behalf, nor the guidance of others, who have gone before him in the business of moral and mental culture, can free him from the necessity of doing work for himself. He must labor in the business of moulding his own character and shaping his own destiny. He cannot hope to be either morally or intellectually great, without being in a most important sense the architect of his own greatness. Others may show him the way; but he must run and climb for himself. Others may give him encouragement, and in his struggle with difficulties, cheer him on; but in himself and in the strength which God has given him for his work, must he find the elements of successful perseverance.

3. The work assigned to man in life, is also a work of intelligent self-control. It may be accounted one of the high prerogatives of humanity, that such control can be exercised, under the guidance of reason, and in obedience to that law which God has appointed in every mind—the law of conscience. The same energies of a free will, which give to man his powers of action, and by which he is fitted to accomplish his appointed work in the service of God, give to him also an ability to govern his own mind and heart. The steady and determined exercise of this ability, no man may surrender who hopes for progress either in knowledge or in virtue, and who accounts it worthy of his posi-

tion as a man on probation, that he should be mindful of his responsibility at the bar of conscience and of God. Does he hope for progress in knowledge? Then must he know how to direct his thoughts in the right channels, and how to apply his intellect to the proper subjects of inquiry within and around him. He must be able to arrest and hold in check the wayward tendencies of his mind to unprofitable speculation, to dreaming and fruitless reverie, as well as to a listless, and dozing, and time-killing indolence. Does he hope for progress in virtue? And would he successfully climb the narrow way which leads to glory and to happiness? Then must he watch with sleepless vigilance the seductive influence of passion within and temptation without. He must ever take care lest the mere animal tendencies of his nature gain the ascendancy over the moral and the spiritual. He must see to it, that he never yield up the mastery of his own mind in subservience to those seductive influences which are wont sometimes to drag down the strongest and the best, to a fit companionship with the weakest and the worst. He who has not learned thus to govern his own mind and heart, and who has not made some progress in the formation of habits, allied to a conscientious and virtuous self-control, has not yet taken the first lesson in that kind of culture, which is worthy of a rational and immortal being. Let such an one take care how he commits his frail bark to the uncertainties of a voyage on the ocean of life. He has no preparation for a manly and successful encounter with its adverse influences of storm and tempest, of current and counter-current, of shoal and quicksand: and if he do not at length find himself a shattered wreck on the shores of eternity, it will be because he has been guided by a Hand which he has himself neither seen nor sought.

4. The work of which I speak, is a work, in the business of doing good to others. By the very constitution which God has given to man, he is made as truly a social, as an intellectual and active being. His love for others, inspired and called out, in the various relations of domestic and social life, is a feeling, as truly, and as deeply laid, in the original elements of his nature, as love for himself. The great law then of reciprocal regard—the law which requires that every man should love his neighbor as himself; and which demands that in all the relations and pursuits of life, he should evince the same sensitive regard for the happiness of others, which he is wont to cherish for his own, is a law not only consonant with reason, but one having its foundation in the deep and instinctive principles of our own common nature. No man may disregard it, and hope to prosper. No man may disregard it, and accomplish the ends of a successful and happy life. The work which man has been fitted to accomplish by the capacities of his active constitution—the work to which he is urged by the impulses of his higher and better nature—nay, the work which has been imposed upon him, and appointed as the grand

business of his life upon earth, by the God who made him, is a work, the range of whose designs and bearings is as wide as the race to which he belongs. It contemplates that race, however diversified by the conditions of outward being—however distinguished by national affinities, or the peculiarities of physical constitution, as one great brotherhood. It excludes no man from the circle of its good wishes. It regards none as beyond the range of its good endeavors. It calls after the wayward and the wandering, and invites them back to the paths of virtue and of duty. It holds out light for the ignorant, and comfort for the afflicted. It gives relief to the sick, and liberty to the oppressed, and bread to the hungry. It builds hospitals, rears churches, and opens schools of learning. It increases facilities for the diffusion of truth and the means of happiness, and for creating the elements of a higher and better civilization among the nations.

This, we say, is one of the grand features of the work appointed for man to accomplish. It is a labor of love in the business of conferring benefits upon others: and as no man can shrink from its obligation, so no one should fear to task in its accomplishment, the highest and best energies of his being.

5. But the work of which I speak, while it is undertaken and performed in obedience to the authority of God, is also one, which recognizes His glory as the end of its highest aims. This is an aspect of our subject, which transcends all that has thus far been noticed. The obligations of this work arise from the fact, that it has been appointed by God. We act as required by His authority, when we discharge the offices of a work, truly accordant with the nature and constitution which He has given us. We act as He requires, when we endeavor intelligently and concientiously, to engage in the business of self-culture and self-control. We recognize and obey His authority when we labor for the good of others in obedience to that law, which demands that every man should love his neighbor as he loves himself.

But while we thus recognize His authority in our work, and cherish hearts of loyalty and obedience toward Him, we are also to remember, that our highest and best motive to its accomplishment, must be a desire, overruling and transcending every other feeling to promote His glory, and honor His name in our lives. He is the source of life and light, and blessedness to the universe. It is fit that the homage of our hearts and intellects should flow back to Him, in the channels of His own wisdom and goodness. It is right that we should profoundly study His attributes, and thence gather the elements of a character, in some faint degree, assimilated to His. We may well strive to understand the principles of His government: nay, if we would know our own duty, and secure our own happiness, we must understand them, and thence derive the impulses which govern our conduct, in the work here appointed for our accomplishment. In that work we

are never to lose sight of our relations to Him. In darkness, as in the light; in secret, as in public places, we are to remember that His eye is upon us, and His presence round about us: and that, as there is no spot in the universe where we can escape His scrutiny, so there is none where we can throw off His authority. It is the requisition of His word, not only, that we should love Him supremely, but that *whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all for His glory.*

6. I add, in conclusion of this part of our subject, that this work is one, in which we are ever to make Christ our example and guide. It was the peculiarity of his work, that it required the feelings and sympathies of humanity, in union with the attributes of divinity: and hence, in certain respects, it transcended alike the ability and the province of ordinary men. And yet, his was a common work. As a work of obedience and love, it was performed in the exercise of capacities, and in the fulfillment of obligations, which are common to every child of Adam: and hence, it may be to us and to all men, a guide and an example. Is ours a work of self-culture and improvement? So also was his: for we are told that he grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man: and that though he were a son, he learnt obedience by the things which he suffered. Is ours a work of self-control in the wise direction of the mind, and in the conscientious government of all sensual appetites and propensities? So also was his. He moved amid publicans and sinners, and yet the purity of his spirit was never sullied. His life was spent in exposure to insult and contumely, and yet, he was never angry. Forty days and nights was he exposed to the temptations of the wilderness, and yet he came forth from the ordeal, as pure gold from the furnace. Is ours a work of benevolence in the business of doing good to others? It was for such a work, that Christ assumed our nature and dwelt upon the earth—suffering in the flesh, that others might be happy—living that others might not die, and dying that others might live. Is ours, in fine, a work of obedience to God's authority, and in subservience ever to God's glory? This, too, was the end and aim of the Saviour's mission, and it is but an embodiment of the spirit which animated his whole life upon the earth, which he makes, when he says, in the words of our text, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." It is thus that Christ has gone before us, in the ways of obedience and of love: and thus, that he has left upon record, in characters of light and goodness never to be obscured, an example after which all men may aspire, and in the imitation of which, they may attain to glory and immortality at God's right hand.

II. But I pass to the second general topic of our text. For the accomplishment of the work which has now been described, diligent effort is necessary. Diligence and earnest endeavor to

fulfill the duties of his mission most manifestly entered into the Saviour's conception of the work which had been assigned to him. How expressive is his language! "I must work while the day lasts: the night cometh in which no man can work." How impressively does he urge this same diligence upon others! as if it were a universal characteristic of the work appointed to men in this world. "Strive," says he, "to enter in at the strait gate: for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." How frequent too, is the recurrence of similar exhortations and sentiments in almost every part of God's word, as if the diligence and the earnest endeavor of which we speak, were fit themes for constant inculcation—to be urged upon men as line upon line, and precept upon precept. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," says the wise man, "do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." "Wherefore," says the apostle, "the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." And again, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

We are not to suppose, that a precept of such frequent inculcation, can be without important reasons, either in the necessity of the case, or in the nature of the work to be accomplished. Let me then briefly direct attention to some of these reasons.

1. I urge as first and most important, that the necessity and obligations of such effort, have been imposed by special divine appointment. It might not be without interest, here to inquire, what would have been true, had man from the beginning retained his integrity, and had he never brought upon himself, and upon the earth the curse of sin. Activity might still have been a condition of his being; but it would ever have been action from the impulses of a happy and joyous spirit, like that of the angels, who fly on exultant wing, and with jubilant voices, to do God's bidding, and who cease not day nor night, from their ascriptions of praise and glory to His name. But in the necessity of labor as now imposed, there is found a profoundly deep and painful significance. It exists as one among the penal consequences of transgression, and by its ever recurring and wasting toils, reminds us that we belong to a race of sinners. It has been appointed among the many means of moral culture and discipline, and if used as designed—if made subservient to a spirit of patience and submission, of penitence and trust—may also prove a means of salvation. And hence, as if with fallen beings like men, nothing could be accomplished without work, the direction is given by the voice of inspiration, "Work out your own salvation: for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do."

2. Diligent effort in the accomplishment of the work assigned us, is a condition to the enjoyment of a healthy and vigorous

state, both of body and of mind. No truth, it is believed, has been more fully tested by experience than this. As by the constitution of his mind, and the capacities of his physical nature, man has been formed for action, and made capable of accomplishing great and important results, so the exercise of his capacities in right modes of action is found to be indispensable alike to usefulness and enjoyment. There is seen to be here, the same harmonious agreement between the constitution of man, and the conditions of his outward being, which every where marks the works and arrangements of the Creator, and which stamps them with the impress of infinite wisdom and goodness. It is hence the ordinance of God, that if men will not work, neither shall they eat: and that if they violate this ordinance they shall pay the penalty of nature in disease of body and imbecility of mind. How impressively too, is this confirmed and made imperative by that great law of our constitution—the law of habit?—that principle by which action, and inaction are found respectively to perpetuate their influence, in ever increasing results of power and of weakness—of happiness and of misery. He, who under this law, obeys the mandate of Heaven,—working with diligence, while the day lasts, not only receives in his own experience, the legitimate fruits of labor, in growing results of strength and power, of competence and respectability, of usefulness and enjoyment; but finds at length that labor itself is sweet, and that what was at first borne, as a necessity, is at last carried, as a delight. He, too, who disregards the mandate which imposes diligence in labor, and who gives to idleness the time which should be spent in work, finds that sloth may become a habit—a habit, too, not only tormenting in itself, but with its appropriate fruits—contempt and neglect among men: shame and remorse in his own bosom; and finally, a restless and corroding consciousness that time itself has become a burden, and yet a burden that can never be thrown off.

3. Diligent effort in the work assigned us, is also a condition to the formation of the highest style of character, both intellectual and moral. This again, it is believed, is a position attested by universal experience. The basis of all that is excellent in character, is doubtless the gift of the Creator: and it is because His gifts in the native endowments of the mind, are endlessly varied, that men are fitted for whatever is individual and peculiar in the work assigned them. It is notwithstanding true, that no man can be truly great and good, or attain to the possession of a character, by which he is made an instrument fit for the accomplishment of whatever is great and good in human effort, without intense labor in the culture of the mind and heart. Without such effort, he cannot hope to fathom the depths of his own spiritual being, and attain to a knowledge of the nature and capacities of his own mind. How much less can he attain to a knowledge of the mind of God, in the understanding of those

disclosures which He has made of Himself in His words and works, and by His developments of providence and grace? Without such effort, he cannot hope to attain to a complete mastery over himself, so as to hold in the steady grasp of reason and conscience, the wayward impulses of his fallen nature. How much less can he be prepared to govern other minds, and to make them willing and cheerful instruments in the accomplishment of his purposes? Without such effort, he cannot hope to understand the simplest elements of knowledge, as presented in the form of systematic and scientific development. How much less can he expect ever to stand up side by side, with those intellectual giants of the past and the present, who have explored the centre and the circumference of human learning?

The analogies of art and of nature, are not without instructive significance in their relation to this topic. For in works of material, as of spiritual formation, it is by processes of patient and long-continued effort that those ends are attained which are wont to charm by their beauty, or startle by their greatness. It was thus that the builders of the pyramids reared their monuments in the pathway of the ages. Thus, painting, and sculpture, and architecture have been made fit vehicles for transmitting the character and the story of other times. Thus, too, in the depths of the ocean, the minute architects of the coral island, add atom to atom, and cliff to cliff, until at length their work overtops the waves with its coronal of fruits and flowers, existing ever after, as a home of commerce and a habitation for men. Such examples may be to us as living instructors. Were the pyramids reared without effort? Were the master-pieces of ancient art produced without patience? Are islands built up from the depths of the ocean without time? Time, and patience, and effort, are also the elements of intellectual and moral greatness, and he who will not use them may never hope to build for himself a character which other ages will delight to hold in remembrance.

4. Diligent effort in the work assigned us, is also a condition to the accomplishment of all high and honorable aims. There are objects embraced in the business of human life, the promotion and accomplishment of which should be to every mind matters of ceaseless endeavor. Some of these I have already brought into view, as indicating common features of the work assigned us. But there is a more specific view of this topic, which is here suggested. In those particular spheres of action, within which men individually seek their appropriate work, if it is their desire to act a truly manly part, they are accustomed to form for themselves precise and definite aims: and I may add, the more precise and definite, the more likely are they to be successful. He who enters upon life without such aims, and who hopes to accomplish its high purposes, and to solve its momentous problems, without bringing to his work steadiness and definiteness

of purpose, has no conception of the true dignity of human nature. He relinquishes the just prerogatives of a rational and immortal being. We say not, indeed, that such an one will never be successful, in that low sense of success, which is measured by circumstances of pecuniary ease and profit. For men are sometimes seen to be borne on to fortune in spite of their own imbecility and fickleness of purpose: just as straws in agitated waters—floating now in eddies, and now carried hither and thither by conflicting currents, are sometimes seen to find a quiet resting place upon the shore. I need not say that such cases are rare exceptions. I need not tell you that men who have not learnt to form for themselves precise and definite plans for the accomplishment of high and honorable aims, and who have no purpose for which to live other than to eat, and drink, and be merry—men who are not capable of bringing up to their work the strength of an earnest and manly enthusiasm—thus giving to it the homage of their best endeavors, and their most persevering efforts—are not fit for the business and the conflicts of life. They may enter upon that business; they may gird themselves for those conflicts; they may flatter themselves and beguile others with visions of anticipated success; but unless they are made successful in defiance of their own weakness, such visions will prove but idle dreams.

5. Diligent effort in the work assigned us, is a condition to the attainment of all real and permanent enjoyment. Exemption from labor—freedom from the cares, and toils, and responsibilities of a diligent life, are, indeed, in the view of not a few, essential elements of a truly happy existence. But they, whose circumstances and inclinations allow them practically to carry out this conception, are wont to find it a most fatal mistake. For of all kinds of misery, next to the wretchedness of positive suffering, that of having nothing to do is the most painful. The mistake, too, which such men commit, is the greater, because while congratulating themselves with the idea that they are men of leisure, and above the necessity of employing their hands, or their intellects in work, are yet really engaged in a task the most toilsome and the most hopeless ever yet undertaken by man—the task of getting rid of time, without useful employment. To pass through life, without having anything good, and useful, and ennobling to do—to spend its precious hours without being animated with the hope of accomplishing something worthy of an intelligent and immortal being—to rise each successive day, while the years are pursuing their rounds, feeling that the night has been too long, and that the day will be yet longer: and saying, when the morning dawns, Oh, that it were night! and when the night comes, Oh, that it were morning!—thus to live listless, and idle, and useless, except as employment is found in feeding, and pampering the body—this, we say, is misery, compared with which the life of the galley-slave is a life of blessed enjoyment. The neces-

sity of diligent effort in accomplishing the high purposes for which life has been given, and this as a condition to the attainment of all that is great in character, and in human enterprise, has been appointed by God himself. He knows what is our constitution, and what our destiny, and what the essential elements of enjoyment here and hereafter. He desires the happiness of his creatures more intensely than any other being. He has given proof of that desire, in the gift of His own Son to a life of toil and suffering upon the earth for the salvation of men : and yet it is His own direction, urged and reiterated in His word, that they shall themselves labor for the rewards of the blessed in heaven, by working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He, then, who lives without work not only disregards the appointment of God, but lives with no rational hope of happiness in this life or in the life to come.

The subject which has occupied our attention suggests important lessons of instruction—important to all ; but especially appropriate to those who are about to enter upon the duties and responsibilities of active life. Allow me then, in conclusion, to bring into view a few of these lessons.

1. It may furnish you, in the first place, with a standard by which to estimate the various pursuits in which men are accustomed to engage in life : and this, whether those pursuits assume the form of amusements, or of serious and business-like employments. We may recognize the great truth implied in our text, that work, directed ever to the accomplishment of God's will, constitutes the proper business of man in this world ; and yet feel no hesitation in admitting that there are modes of relaxation which are both innocent and useful—innocent, because they violate no law ; and useful, because they may serve to invigorate the body, refresh the mind, and thus prepare the whole man for engaging with a better zest in the higher employments of life. On the other hand, there are amusements of a widely different character—amusements which bring weakness and disease upon the body, which relax and unnerve the mind, and which render distasteful and odious whatever is worthy of pursuit in a truly manly and virtuous course. There are those whose only conception of enjoyment is that of access to such amusements, and with whom life itself seems but a continued holiday of pleasure, to be broken only by that satiety, and disgust with which a life of pleasure is wont to exhaust itself and defeat its own ends. So, also, there are those whose highest conception of the business of life is that of employment in pandering to the vices of others : in fanning the flames of unholy appetite ; in giving unreal, but seductive charms to the multiplied forms of unlawful gratification : thus acting as allies to Satan in tempting to their own ruin those who have not strength of purpose to turn aside from the paths of the destroyer. I need not say to you that such pleasures and

such employments can have no place in the work assigned us by the Author of our being. In contact with those whose lives are devoted to such pursuits, the inculcation of inspired wisdom must be the talisman of your safety,—“Touch not, taste not, handle not.” You may not tamper with their incentives to evil, and yet retain the purity of your own minds. You may not be drawn to their places of seduction, and yet retain the integrity of your own principles.

But, there are employments of a yet higher character; employments both honorable and useful in themselves, but which may yet be so pursued as not to accomplish your appointed work in life. You may love knowledge for its own sake, and pursue it with the zeal and intensity of a master-passion; but if it be without regard to its use, in subserving the cause of truth and virtue among men, you will not fill up in life the measure of your capacities and responsibilities. You may love property, and labor for its accumulation, but if it be only for the pleasure of accumulating and hoarding, you will but realize the miser's experience in life, and the miser's bitterness in death. The longing of your hearts may be for power and influence among men, and you may struggle for it in the arena of political strife, or fight for it in the conflicts of the battle field; but if you have no higher aspiration, life will only work out for you in the end results of disappointment and sorrow. It matters not, in fine, to what end your labors are directed. They may be those in which the highest achievements of earthly distinction and greatness are wont to be made; but forget not that those labors are to be pursued only in recognition of God's will, and God's authority. Nothing less than this will meet the standard of your duties and responsibilities.

2. But, in the second place, our subject may show you with what habit and attitude of mind you should apply yourselves to the accomplishment of your work in life. Said the Saviour, in answer to the interrogations of his parents, when he was first entering upon his work,—“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” And this was the feeling which animated his life; and which he carried into every scene of labor and of suffering. This, too, prompted his words, when he said, in the significant language of our text,—“I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day.” His was a habit of steady, continued application to the work assigned him. His mind did not waver and fluctuate; going from object to object, and from one scheme of effort to another, without the successful accomplishment of any. Its energies were not wasted in habits of dreaming reverie, or of idle speculation, or in baseless visions of good to be accomplished under circumstances impossible in the nature of things. His conception of the work assigned him was clear and definite; and the attitude of his mind was ever that of diligent attention to its accomplishment. In this, as in all things else, let his example be your guide and pattern. Carry it with

you into the fields of effort and of conflict, on which you are entering. Carry it with you in the business of self-culture and improvement, until you have become animated by his spirit, and assimilated to his character. Carry it with you in your resistance to the power of evil within and around you; and in all your efforts to do good, by subserving the cause of truth and happiness among men, let that be with you the standard of your aims, and your high incentive to diligence and fidelity in the work.

3. Remember, too, as did the Saviour, that the night cometh in which no man can work. And if, perchance, it shall be to you the closing up of a long life, ushering in at last the darkness of the grave, its coming will, notwithstanding, soon be upon you, cutting short your work, and closing up the record of your doings. Yes, the night cometh! It may come before you have dreamed of its approach, and while, as yet, your life seems to be in its meridian, overshadowing the day with clouds, and giving monitions of an early and premature darkness. Will you not, then, be diligent while it is day? Will you not see to it that your work is done, and well done in its appointed season? The night may then come, and it shall not be to you the night of a lost eternity. The night may come, and you shall greet its coming as the precursor of a bright and more glorious day in that world where God is the light, and where the sun of your glory and happiness shall never go down.

## SERMON DCXIV.

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### SPECIAL EVANGELICAL EFFORTS IN CITIES.

"Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servants, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind."—LUKE xiv. 21.

OUR Lord's familiar illustration of the Gospel provision by the parable of a marriage feast suggests various distinct and profitable applications. As it was first intended to foretell the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, it teaches a solemn lesson respecting the goodness and severity of God: his long-suffering patience, and final wrath on them that fell, and the absolute sovereignty of his grace towards such as are brought into the fold.

It serves, likewise, very beautifully to set forth the abundance of the supply, and the unrestricted freeness of the offer. It is adapted to all; it is sufficient for all; it is offered to all. There is no individual of any class, or condition, or character, who may not participate of the gift. Again, the excuses of the invited guests show the very general disesteem in which the Gospel is held, and the kind of motives by which men are uniformly influenced in their rejection of it. "*All begin to make excuse;*" and all assign plausible, but selfish, worldly reasons for their conduct.

The danger, again, of their case, who, from any cause, treat the call with neglect and disdain, is strikingly exhibited. The day of their merciful visitation passes by, and they perish notwithstanding the amplitude of the provision. "None of those which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Finally, we may gather from the parable a lesson concerning the duty resting upon those who already enjoy the Gospel to impart it to such as are yet destitute of its light and its hopes. We are not to monopolize it, but to send it to others needing it just as much as ourselves;—to China, to enlighten the poor worshipper of dead ancestors; to India, to rescue the devotee from the wheels of Juggernaut; the babe, which a mother's mistaken zeal consigns to the waters of the Ganges;—to the follower of the false prophet; to benighted Africa; to the islands of the sea, that it may at length demolish the vast fabric of superstition and idolatry which satan has for ages been erecting in our world, and bless the ruined race with the glad tidings of great joy. Among ourselves, too, we must take care not merely that affluence, and elegance, and learning, shall have fitting accommodations to hear the message, but that for the poor, the degraded, the sorrowful, the oppressed, ample room shall likewise be furnished. We are not to *wait* until they come to us; we are to *go* to them. We must *carry* to the negligent the word they will not seek: *wem ust search out* the sufferer, pining upon his bed of sickness; the lone

widow ; the orphan in the chambers of solitary wretchedness ; the slaves of vice ; the abandoned in their dens of infamy. We must breathe into the ear of that child of sorrow the sweet words of a Saviour's sympathy, and rouse the desponding heart. We must sit down beside the outcast, win his confidence by tones of kindness ; tell him of " grace to help in every time of need," and so inspire courage and hope where evil habit had destroyed all self-control, and left only remorse and despair. We must point the wanderers to the gospel heavens, in which the sun of righteousness doth set his bow of promise. We must tell them how the evening of their stormy life may become serene and hopeful ; how their setting sun may convert the clouds that have obscured its course into a pavilion of glory, the joyous harbinger of another and a brighter day. Moreover, we must not be easily repulsed nor discouraged on our godlike errand ; but with self-denying perseverance, with the persuasion of lips upon which is the law of kindness, with the earnestness of a heart full of the love of souls and of Jesus, we must use a holy violence to bring them to the feast. " Go out into the streets and lanes of the city," and " compel them to come in."

But there is another train of thought very naturally suggested by the language of the text, which I intend to pursue in this discourse—viz., *the necessity and adaptation of the Gospel to cities, and the importance of making them the fields of special evangelical efforts.* Certainly the religion of the New Testament was not designed exclusively for any one place or set of circumstances, but for man as he exists at all times and in all modes of social life. This parable contains a direction to " go out into the highways and hedges" in search of guests ; and so teaches that the scattered tribes of men, and even the wayfarer, are not to be overlooked. But there appears to me something significant in the fact that the Saviour not only made the compact villages and cities so often the sphere of his personal labors, but commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel, " beginning at Jerusalem ;" and when persecuted in one city to flee into another ; and also in the fact that the apostles, in strict observance of this injunction, almost uniformly selected populous cities as the seats of their ministrations. This was not simply to convince men that now, since the resurrection of Christ, the doctrine they had in charge was so well authenticated by evidence that they could boldly court the greatest publicity, and challenge the strictest scrutiny ;—but it was likewise because cities offered peculiar facilities for success in the mission they had been called to fulfill—to " preach the Gospel to every creature." For this reason it was that they began their aggressive warfare at points where their efforts would be most effective, even " where satan's seat was."

I proceed then to some suggestions which serve to illustrate this topic.

I. The first thought that occurs to the mind in this relation is, that their very *populousness* gives to cities great interest and importance as fields for evangelical efforts. This is a consideration that appeals strongly to the sympathies and also to the convenience of the laborer. Who that has ordinary sensibility can take his station at the confluence of some of the main avenues, or on some thoroughfare of a large city, and observe the tide of human beings that rolls along from morning to night without interruption, that does not entirely cease the livelong night, and not be deeply moved by what he beholds ? How much life is there, and that not

merely the sensation of brutes ; but how much intelligence, and emotion, and activity, and enterprise ! What varieties of character and conditions !—what projects and plans !—what aspirations and disappointments !—what hopes and what despair are represented in the scene that is passing before him ! He does not look upon a herd of animals, but upon thinking man. And that multitudinous way may afford him a vivid panorama of our world and of the race of man upon it : of the ever-shifting scene, the changing actors, and the joys or woes that fill up the pageantry of time. To one given to reflection, such a spectacle may excite more absorbing interest, and easily teach lessons of far higher value than all those other objects of curiosity with which a city abounds. But the Christian remembers that of that endless mass every one has an immortal soul, and is passing on to a judgment bar. The crowds he sees form too but a portion of the entire population of that city. What vast numbers besides are occupied with various in-door callings ! How many are the poor, the sick, the suffering, who never appear to the public eye ! and how many other currents are flowing on in other directions besides that which is immediately in view !—All these are made in the image of God—all are immortal, accountable—all are candidates for heaven or hell. As preceding generations have occupied the same places, have been engrossed by the same pursuits, and have passed away after a short and fevered career, so all these are hastening on to the dread account. What Christian revolving such thoughts in his mind, can refrain from giving vent to his feelings in the touching language of the Saviour : “ I have compassion on the multitude ? ” Who that notices their trivial, sensual occupations, the perfect worldliness of their chosen pursuits, will not, like Paul at Athens, feel “ his spirit stirred within him when he sees the city wholly given to idolatry ? ”—So far, then, as it is necessary to enkindle warm-hearted, Christian sympathy, the sight of the multitude is well adapted to that end. But there is another advantageous circumstance. Our object is to bring divine truth into contact with the greatest number of minds, and enforce its claims upon the conscience ; to make men realize their relations to it, and its adaptation to them ; its connection with their soul’s peace, and its wide-reaching and ever-during consequences. In cities, large masses are collected within narrow limits : they live compactly, and are easily accessible ; so that many more persons than in other circumstances can be reached in a short time, and with the same amount of well-directed labor. For example : France is studded with towns and villages of various sizes : but you know Paris is France : and within the comparatively small compass of that city are collected over a million of human beings. The entire population of England, not including Scotland and Wales, is a little short of seventeen millions. The whole country is well peopled, and there are many large inland and sea-port towns : but of the entire aggregate of inhabitants, nearly two millions and a half are congregated upon the area covered by the city of London alone ! Within half a century, its increase has been nearly a million and a half. And that single city contains a population equal to the entire kingdom of Denmark ; half that of Sweden, and Norway, and Portugal, and Belgium, and Holland. Our own country, particularly in the Atlantic States, may be said to be thickly settled ; and there are many towns of considerable magnitude. But Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, are the great points of attraction. Thither the current sets from all parts and the masses are found ; and that population is made up of all characters and classes, presenting the material for all kinds of benevolent labor, and all modes of address. The extremes always meet there.

We see bloated wealth and haggard want; the highest refinement and vulgar display; the palace and the hovel in the closest proximity. Specimens of piety of the most intense and devoted kind; philanthropy self-sacrificing and unwearied, inventive and enterprising to devise and execute plans of benevolence, and to bear succor to the needy; the highest forms of humanity, the most beautiful illustrations of the pure spirit and effective activity of Christ's Gospel are there; and there, too, heartless selfishness and hoarding avarice abound; and there the very worst characters herd, to contrive, and practice their villany, and man reaches the lowest point of personal and social degradation.—The spacious avenues are lined with store-houses, in which are gathered the rare and costly products of every clime; and commercial success furnishes to all classes the means of gratifying pride and luxury, the invariable attendants upon increasing riches. Splendid equipages glitter before the eye, and crowds of the fashionable and the gay expand their lustrous wings in the sun-beams of folly. The show proceeds until the sight is pained, and the imagination itself is bewildered with the varied and the gorgeous display. But hard by, what a different scene presents itself! Narrow, filthy lanes and ruined hovels literally swarm with life. The neglected outcasts of every color, and lineage, and tongue, hide themselves from the public gaze in remote corners up close alleys, in garrets and cellars; and the profligate find a congenial retreat and are at home. Misery, indeed, dwells there; but there also vice and crime hold their orgies, and moral corruption festers in its own rankness and becomes gangrened, and spreads its poison through the atmosphere around.

In another direction, again, are found objects that awaken a different interest—Christ's poor to be ministered unto. I could recently have taken you to a remote spot, where, after mounting the trembling stairway, in a confined garret lay a father, passing away, in the prime of his years, the victim of consumption. His daily labor had been the sole dependence of an affectionate wife and bright, promising children. That provision was now at an end, and strangers in a strange land, their entire support was from the precarious charity of those who might casually become acquainted with their destitution. It was a hard lot, for they had been accustomed to better things. For her and for her children the prospect was dark indeed. But there was no murmur there. They had professed to be the Saviour's followers, and now was the time to trust him while he led them through a dreary way. They knew that God was a refuge, and a very present help in trouble, and to him they fled. The promise of covenant care, the doctrines of Bible truth, and the voice of prayer, inspired resignation and hope. The dying man could leave his loved ones to Him who is "a Father of the fatherless, and the widow's God," and depart in hope. And they remain Christ's legacy to his people on earth. But many instances of equal sadness exist among us—nor need you search far to find them out. Any Pastor, any Tract Missionary, or visitor of the Society for the Relief of the Poor, can tell you of such cases not a few. How true is it that "one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives," nor the superior mercies of their own lot! Hence, to ourselves as much as to them, the value of personal intercourse with the poor and forsaken. And remember that "to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction," is one test of Christian character. That piety that luxuriates in religious sentimentalism, that does not evince and corroborate its life by beneficent action, certainly is not healthful in its tone—is not half so beautiful to man, nor so acceptable to God as that which blends the in.

cense of daily prayer with the visits of mercy and the oblations of unostentatious charity.

Now, all these classes are found mainly in our cities. City populations are made up of just such varieties. Here is the material for our work. Here is the field ripe for the harvest, and Christians are called to enter it. These multitudes, so diverse in many respects, are in others upon a level. They have souls of incalculable worth; they have all gone out of the way of life; Christ came to seek and to save the lost; and these lost ones we must strive, with his blessing, to save, by bringing to them the knowledge of the truth. They are compact; at our doors. Many can be easily approached; for Providence has prepared the way by disappointments and sorrow. But if they neglect or repel all ordinary means of grace, still must we not abandon the work; for interests too momentous to them, society, their posterity, and the kingdom of Christ, are depending upon our labors.

II. I remark, again, that the **EXCITABILITY** of a city population, their curiosity, their Athenian love of novelty, although, in some points of view, indeed, disadvantageous, may yet in others be favorable to our purpose, if we are wise to adapt ourselves and our instrumentality to meet the case. And this, I am persuaded, we can do, without derogating from the proprieties of the religious character, or losing sight of the dignity of the divine message. Now, the regular ministrations of the word and ordinances by settled pastors in organized churches, I feel to be so essential to the growth and perpetuity of Christ's kingdom, that no other ordinance or mode of operation can supply their place. These are the bulwark and defence of Christianity. In them is nurtured the spirit, and there are found the resources that support all your benevolent operations. Out of them, and from the teachings of the stated ministry, come the means and the men that make this age conspicuous beyond all others for evangelical enterprise. And any comparison between this and any other mode of religious action, to the disparagement of a thoroughly educated and settled ministry, is exceedingly unwise—for it overlooks the very source of our power—and unscriptural, for it dishonors the Saviour's special appointment for lasting good in the world. But then, there is no doubt in my mind that, in subordination to this, there is room for other modes of effort and address, and that the condition of our country, and especially of our cities, calls for their use. We are apt to connect with the missionary-work, the idea of a far-off field, destitute of all means of grace; a community where no Sabbath dawns; where there are no Bibles; and where no voice of the living preacher breaks upon the stillness of spiritual death with the tidings of salvation. Yet, in Christian lands, there are hundreds of thousands just as destitute. They live in the heart of Christian communities, and therefore experience a sort of reflex influence upon their sentiments and conduct, from the prevalence of Christian institutions around them. But as to any personal concern in the matter, they have no abiding religious convictions, and are as literally "without God in the World," as if they were buried in the depths of Gentilism. They will not voluntarily seek our churches, for all their tastes and habits are averse from divine ordinances, and unless some means be devised to get hold of them, to engage their attention and excite their interest, this indifference will grow and ripen and bear deadly fruits of impiety. Yet, they are acute and inquisitive; fond of excitement; and, as often appears, their feelings may be easily enlisted on subjects of religious

concern. If, then, we can take advantage of this propensity—if, by means somewhat peculiar, yet consistent with Christian sobriety, we may bring them within the reach of good influences, and by degrees allure them to the house of God and to religious associations—it is our evident duty to make the effort. The Methodists, in their early rise, did this kind of work in Great Britain, and with wonderful effect. They seemed to be raised up by Providence, for the special service of arousing a torpid church to sensation and life, when vital religion was at a point of most lamentable depression. And whatever we might object to the system of Wesley and his coadjutors, as a permanent mode of operation in an already regulated church, yet the impulse of a single will upon zealous subordinates, adapted it admirably for aggressive warfare upon the ignorant and vicious masses. And they have been successful pioneers in our new settlements, and have fulfilled a noble mission in all lands. Yet Wesley, Whitefield, and their associates, committed themselves to a novel course, which probably an urgent cause could alone justify. In their case it surely did. By field preaching and by breaking through the fetters of a dead formality in other ways, they revived apostolic scenes, and wrought signal triumphs—God working with them as in times of primitive Christianity. If I am asked whether I would commend out-door preaching among ourselves, I reply, that I could neither advise nor, if soberly done, condemn it. It is a work that requires peculiar qualifications, and, moreover, such an inward conviction of personal duty, and such a hallowed consecration of mind and heart, as can brook no ordinary restraints, and is ready to endure all things from love to the Saviour and the souls of men. It needs a very special call; and, in its nature, I think, must be temporary, since its success will much depend upon its novelty, appealing as it does to the curiosity of the popular mind. The exigencies of the lower classes, and of the immigrant class, may demand some such expedient. And so long as the truth in Jesus is taught, his institutions are honored and good is done, I am not disposed too rigidly to object to the ways of others because they follow not with us.

But other means, since Wesley's day, have been brought into operation, adapted, in a good measure, to meet these wants. Our Bible and Tract, and Sabbath School Societies; the city missionary and the colporteur; missionary-preaching in tents or in the large rooms of public buildings, suit the case; and, by such agencies, incalculable good has already been done. Why do Popery, infidelity, the various forms of delusion and impiety, so loudly rail at the ministry, at these societies, and such efforts, if it be not that they have had a taste of their success. What means of these kinds we have, then, let us ply with all the skill of adaptation and decision of purpose they will possibly allow. And, I think, we shall then find no great difficulty in keeping alive the curiosity and interest of the popular mind.

III. Again; our general subject may be illustrated by the fact that LARGE CITIES ARE CENTRES OF POWER AND SOURCES OF INFLUENCE OVER surrounding regions; indeed over the whole country. Here wealth accumulates, which, proverbially, is power. Here fashion holds its court and enacts its decrees, which are submissively obeyed, to the cut of a coat, the style of a bonnet, the dressing of the hair, by the beaux and the belles of every village in the land. From Paris, London, Washington, from every capital, goes forth the legislation that controls the entire people, and, in many cases, even those on the other side of the globe. At the Bourse, at the Exchange in

London, in Wall-street, are conducted the money transactions of the world. The prices of stocks, the value of railroads, your banking operations, are all settled at the broker's board. And in cities the means are sought by which all those enterprises are carried on that keep capital in circulation and provide various employments for the laboring classes. A large commercial metropolis is the great heart of the country, that beats in unison with the pulsations of every part, and sends the life-blood through every vein and artery from the centre to the extremities of the body politic. Of course all who have fortunes to make or to spend, naturally seek the cities. Here collect the young men—the ardent, the enterprising—from every quarter; those of the finest talents and best habits, and those without morals or principle; and the grand object is to acquire wealth. With many, their motto is, "Get money: get it honestly if you can: but get money." Here too it is spent profusely, for pleasure or sensuality; but with equal munificence at the call of philanthropy, ungrudgingly and with wide diffusion. To show the influence of this city in this view, we may simply observe, that there is hardly a college, or seminary, or new village church erected, that does not seek help from the city. And usually they meet a courteous reception and substantial aid. The amounts annually bestowed in benevolence would surprise those who have never looked into the matter. Nor is there, as I believe, a more liberal set of men in the world than the business men of New-York.

Now all these things give importance and influence to the city. Hundreds of thousands resort to it for trade or amusement, and form a floating population far exceeding the stated numbers of many large towns. Being free from observation and the restraints of home, they are tempted to plunge into the gayeties and vices of the town. When these persons return to their homes, or when the young clerk revisits his native village, they will seek to enhance their importance in the eyes of their old companions, by a parade of city style or manners, to the overthrow of those chaste and simple virtues their fathers practiced. Or, what is worse, the corruption with which they have become infected, cleaves to them and introduces a moral pestilence into the place. Many of our beautiful rural retreats have thus lost the decent character and the modest charms they once possessed, through the encroachments of city habits.

Again; the literature of the city is the staple reading of the whole land. Here it is produced. And the penny sheet or formidable journal; the magazine, the novel, all descriptions, good and bad, to suit all tastes, and at all prices, immediately find their way to the steamboats, rail-cars, hotels, and are hawked and purchased and read from Maine to Georgia, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It cannot be but that a decisive influence must follow. And when we consider what is the character of much of this product, how the vilest sentiments are insinuated or openly taught, what floods of sensuality have proceeded from some of our largest printing establishments, in the form of newspapers, or novels, or even the philosophical treatise, we see that that influence must be disastrous in the extreme. It is as if a destroying angel were flying through the land, breathing pestilence among its inhabitants, and touching with blight and mildew the fields rich with promise of future abundance. And when the thoughtlessness which even good men have displayed in this matter, is remarked, one is almost tempted to wish the freedom of the press restricted, that the nuisance might be abated.

It is true there is a counterpart to all this. The influence of the religious character of the city is vast and equally diffusive. It has need to

be so, to hold in check the forces of Satan, and keep alive the tone of piety in the midst of so much ungodliness. Your churches, and preachers, and Sabbath-school, and Bible and Tract operations, the Young Men's Associations, Temperance Societies, and other good agencies, are well known, and become the models of similar institutions elsewhere; they supply and their missionaries and colporteurs spread broadcast the religious literature which is to counteract the destructive effects of infidel and sensual publications, and to feed the masses everywhere with knowledge and understanding. The hopes of Christians turn to these agencies to fulfill this service. And when they at the farthest extremity of the country, consider how absolutely their own interests, as well as those of other lands are blended with the success of these societies, they surely will feel the obligation more pressing, to minister means and to encourage them by their prayers. Were our Bible and Tract Houses to sink, and carry down with them the agencies they represent, and they could not be restored, I sincerely think the calamity to the country and the world would be more deplorable, than if the millions of material wealth collected in this city were consumed. The one could be borne and recovered; the other would remove that which makes a people truly prosperous, by making them virtuous, and gives a better hope to erring man.

IV. I remark once more, that the TEMPTATIONS in large cities render evangelical efforts peculiarly necessary to guard and save the unwary. I know that temptations exist everywhere, and the depraved heart is easily inflamed. But nowhere can vice assume so bold and flaunting an air—nowhere do facilities for sinful indulgence so much abound—nowhere does the tempter spread his wiles so insidiously to beguile the heedless—and nowhere can every taste find such ready gratification, with the promise of such entire secrecy, as in a large city. First, the whole arrangement of city life is fraught with danger to the moral and religious principles of even such as are most scrupulously watchful. It is a scene of worldly parade, and competition, and indulgence. All classes strive after it, or are gradually drawn into it. And as it is seen that elegant personal decorations, gorgeous furniture, equipage, state, luxurious living, require money, and that “money answereth all things,” the temptation with many, to esteem its acquisition the great object of life, becomes almost irresistible. Hence the complete absorption of the mind in business; the danger of lowering the standard of piety; of forgetting the soul in the adornment of the body, its heavenly mansion in the grandeur of its earthly habitation. Hence, too, the temptation to forfeit trusts, and seize dishonest gains; to make haste to be rich by speculations and fraud.—Our hotel palaces also are making sad inroads upon our habits, by inducing families to break up their separate establishments, and live in splendor, free from domestic care. And if domestic virtue do not suffer it will be wonderful. Think what must be the magnitude of these establishments, and what the throng to this city, and what the influence upon city and country, when the profits of one for a single year are said to exceed one hundred and twenty thousand dollars! But the amusements of a city are likewise sources of evil. Scores, from the low show shop to the magnificent museum, or theatre, may be found, where men, women, and children may be suited with low buffoonery, or *moral plays*, according to their taste or consciences, at all hours of the day, almost of the night. Hundreds of such receptacles are said to be open on the Sabbath, chiefly for the foreign population, where music and dancing violate the sanctity of the day, and

perpetuate foreign vices among us. Hard by abound places, licensed and unlicensed, for the sale of intoxicating liquors, from the meanest groggery to the elegant saloon, where seduction sits at the door, and saith: "Come eat of my dainties, and drink of the wine that I have mingled!" And multitudes are tempted to enter, not knowing that those "ways are the ways of hell, going down to the chamber of death." The exposure of all classes, but especially of the young, of transient strangers, and of young men who come from the country to obtain positions in business, and are free from the restraints of home, is, beyond computation, dreadful. The lack of society, or love of amusement, may be so strong as to override conscience; or they may vainly imagine that their virtue will be armor-proof against temptation when it comes. And they often hasten, "as a bird to the snare, not knowing it is for its life." No places can be found in small towns or villages so low, and none so grand as thousands where the flames of hell are enkindled; and no objects of guilt and ruin either so splendid or so forlorn and hopeless as those that are common in large cities. I could narrate thrilling stories of some within my own knowledge, both high and low, from country and city, whose early promise has been most woefully blighted; whose fervid course of transgression, and sad and ever-tragic ends could be traced to their ambition to figure among the rich and fashionable, or to the temptation presented by our theatres and their accompaniments: the drinking saloon, the gambling hell, vicious companions, and guilty indulgences. It requires no imagination to devise such characters, or dress out such scenes: they are, alas! too natural and too common. The reality will often be far more startling than vivid picture—fact than fiction. And when we reflect what numbers of all classes and characters collect in cities; how assiduous the tempter is; how wretchedness may seek relief or excuse in its absolute misery for indulgence, we need not enlarge on the dangers of city temptations.

But can any lover of his kind, can a Christian reflect upon these things, and not ask, is there no remedy? Can he feel that cities are not on all accounts fields demanding special religious efforts? If a man of wealth, can he fail to inquire whether a portion of that wealth, acquired in the city, should not be liberally devoted to the interests of the city? Whether his poor neighbor does not want food he can supply? Whether there is not some helpless orphan he can raise to hope and usefulness? Some widow to whom he can extend the means of preserving herself and her children from despair? Can he not inquire if his efforts may not procure the blessings of education to some youth who has talents, and only wishes the opportunity to be allowed to use them? Whether there be not some worthy young man just struggling into business to whom he might stretch out a helping hand? Whether in these or other ways he may not preserve his gold from the canker that consumes hoarded riches, and bless himself by becoming a blessing to others. Again, since the bestowment of temporal gifts is not the only mode of beneficence, nor this world the whole of man's existence, let such an one ask, if there be not some objects of religious benefaction that legitimately claim his regard. Can you not send a Bible to a destitute family? Can you not induce your neighbors to send their children to the Sabbath School, or themselves to attend the sanctuary? Can you not aid the erection of some feeble church or of missionary houses for the destitute? There is a large class among us, our foreign population, who require this aid, or they will settle and spread among us without any religious principles, and be little fitted to become good citizens, or to hand down to others our institutions which

have been planted, and can only be perpetuated by the influence of Protestant piety. But why should I multiply such inquiries? The citizens of New York have always shown a most commendable spirit on these subjects; and after the recent example of bequests to the amount of tens twenties, hundreds of thousands for religious uses, I do not fear that they are growing weary in well doing.

The City Tract Society fills one very essential department of labor, and co-operates in various ways with other associations which look to the temporal or spiritual wants of the dependent classes in our city. This society was organized in 1827, and occupies itself in the dispersion of tracts; and more especially by missionary instruction and personal address seeks to reach the destitute and bring them under the influence of regular religious ordinances. In 1852 it employed 26 missionaries, and 1,176 visitors, and the results of its labors in various ways were highly satisfactory. When you consider what an immense number of immigrants are landed in our streets (300,000 annually), how many foreigners make this their permanent abode, and how many tarry for a short time on their way to our Western States; and when you reflect who these immigrants are, how much they need religious instruction, and how certainly they will not get it by their own exertions, nor in any way except it be by some such organization, you will confess that this society has an important work to do. There is a class our regular means of grace cannot reach. They are thrown upon us by Providence from all countries of Europe, and with all kinds of religious notions; they are to make part of this great republic and greatly to influence its destinies; but still more important, they are immortal beings hastening to eternity, and they depend on us for the light that is to guide and the hope that is to save them! The appeal in their destitution is at once to the patriot and the Christian to send them help from the sanctuary, and strengthen them out of Zion. But besides these the seamen and boatmen of this commercial metropolis, the inmates of our humane and criminal institutions, and the outskirts of the city come under the supervision of this society. Now no one acquainted with New York can survey the field and not see the vast importance of just such an instrumentality to meet cases that must be met in this way or not at all. You could not, perhaps would not, do this service. Then aid and encourage such as can and will. This subject of provision for the religious wants of the destitute among us is forcing itself more and more earnestly upon the attention of our churches. And well it may when we observe what is going on. What luxury to draw away the rich from regard to religion, and what poverty and vice to deter masses from seeking divine ordinances; and then this constant tide of immigration, which obviously is giving to our city a new and foreign aspect. The result we must regard with solicitude. Yet I do not believe that either our religion or our republic is to go down in the torrent. I believe that God has prepared this people by a peculiar course of discipline for this crisis and now sends them over to us that we may bless them with religious light and civil freedom—and then they will send back to the Old World the influence that shall there work and prepare the people of the Old World to assert and enjoy the same blessings. But however that may be, our mission is not merely to possess and enjoy, but to impart and to bless. And if we be faithful we may stand pre-eminent among the nations, and be honored to grace his coronation when Jesus shall come to assume the crown and the sceptre of the millennial kingdom.